

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 63, No. 1

Friday, January 2, 1998

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Wasatch Powderbird Guides Outfitter and Guide Special-Use Permit, Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Salt Lake Ranger District, Salt Lake County, Utah and Uinta National Forest, Pleasant Grove and Spanish Fork Ranger Districts, Utah County, Utah

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement on Wasatch Powderbird Guides request for a five-year outfitter and guide special-use permit for guided helicopter skiing activities on National Forest Land.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by January 30, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Michael Sieg, District Ranger, 6944 South 3000 East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84121.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rob Cruz, District Environmental Coordinator, (801) 943-9483.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Wasatch Powderbird Guides, a current "Special Use Permit" permittee, is proposing to operate a heli-skiing operation for another five-years along the Wasatch Front of the Wasatch-Cache and Uinta National Forests. This proposal includes elements on both public and private lands. Elements include the landing of helicopters to drop off and pick-up heli-skiers who are skiing across both public and private land holdings. A complete description of the proposal is available from the Salt Lake Ranger District. This proposal was originally scoped in January 1997, since then it was decided that there may be significant impacts, therefore an environmental impact statement is being completed. A letter

explaining the decision to conduct an environmental impact statement, and soliciting comments will be sent to nearly 300 individuals, organizations and government agencies who responded to the original scoping dated January 27, 1997. Individuals, organizations or other government agencies may request a copy of the original scoping document and/or send additional comments by writing to the Salt Lake Ranger District.

Issues identified since January 1997 include effects on public safety, effects on Wilderness areas, effects of snowpack stability testing on vegetation, effects on wildlife, including golden eagles and threatened, endangered and sensitive species, effects on the economic viability of Wasatch Powderbird Guides and the local economy and effects to other winter recreationalists. Two preliminary alternatives have been identified. The proposed action alternative would permit the aforementioned heli-skiing operation with the following criteria: a limit of 2 helicopters, a 5-year average of 2400 skier days per year, a 5-year average of 1200 skier days per year in the Tri-Canyon (Mill Creek, Big, and Little Cottonwood Canyons) terrain and a 5-year average of 1000 explosives per year. The No Action alternative would eliminate helicopter skiing along the Wasatch Front and require a change to the current Forest Plan. Other alternatives will look at use rotation methods to reduce conflict between heli-skiing operations and other winter recreationalists.

The public is invited to submit comments or suggestions to the address above. Comments received from individuals, groups and government agencies received from the January 1997 scoping document will be incorporated into this analysis. The responsible officials are Bernie Weingardt and Peter Karp, Forest Supervisors. A draft EIS is anticipated to be filed in May 1998 and the final EIS filed in September 1998.

The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate at that time. To be the most helpful, comments on the draft environmental impact statement should

be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement or the merits of the alternatives discussed (see The Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3).

In addition, Federal court decisions have established that reviewers of draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewers' position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 533 (1978). Environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, (9th Circuit, 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). The reason for this is to ensure that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final.

Dated: December 23, 1997.

Michael Sieg,

District Ranger.

[FR Doc. 97-34202 Filed 12-31-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Designation for Lima (OH) and the State of Virginia

AGENCY: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: GIPSA announces the designation of Lima Grain Inspection Service, Inc., and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Virginia) to provide official services under the United States Grain Standards Act, as amended (Act).

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 1, 1998.

ADDRESSES: USDA, GIPSA, Janet M. Hart, Chief, Review Branch, Compliance Division, STOP 3604, Room 1647-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3604.